



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **President Clinton met with the families of two American students who died in terror attacks in Israel.** After giving a speech in New Jersey, Clinton met the family of Alisa Flatow, who was killed last April in the Gaza Strip, and of Sara Duker, who died in the Feb. 25 suicide bombing aboard a Jerusalem bus. Both families live in New Jersey.

■ **Israel ordered all Palestinian students from the Gaza Strip who study in the West Bank to return home.** The order was part of a series of measures adopted by Israeli leaders in the wake of the recent wave of suicide bombings in Israel.

■ **Auschwitz survivors and Jewish leaders are protesting plans to open a mini-mall across the street from the Nazi death camp.** The Polish developer of the mall said he saw nothing wrong with the idea.

■ **Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini assured the United States that he would uncover how a Palestinian convicted of killing an American Jew, Leon Klinghoffer, during the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking escaped from jail.** Meanwhile, the Italian foreign minister said the current law, which permits cooperative inmates to spend time out of jail, was a "mistake" and should be changed.

■ **The House International Relations Committee plans to scrutinize Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's compliance with the peace accords with Israel.** The Palestine Liberation Organization representative to the United States, Hassan Abdel Rahman, is among the witnesses slated to testify at the hearing.

■ **Palestinians barricaded inside their towns by the Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are running low on food, and two dozen seriously ill patients cannot get to the Jewish state for treatment, doctors and U.N. officials said.** Israel, which has twice lifted the blockade of Palestinian towns to allow the import of supplies, sealed the areas more than two weeks ago in an effort to stop the recent series of Hamas terrorist bombings.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Peres recovers public support with firm response to terrorism

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — After 10 days in hell, Prime Minister Shimon Peres is not politically dead yet.

On the contrary, the 73-year-old Peres seemed to be bouncing back from the political nadir that followed the Feb. 25 and March 3 and 4 suicide bombings that rocked Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ashkelon, killing 58 innocent people and wounding more than 200 others.

Before the four suicide attacks, Peres had more than a 10-point lead over Benjamin Netanyahu, his Likud rival in the race for the prime ministership.

That lead eroded after the bombings, with some polls showing Netanyahu taking the lead.

But by last weekend, the polls put both candidates at a more or less equal level after Peres had bottomed out in the immediate aftermath of the terror attacks.

Clearly, the political fight is far from over — despite the backlash against Peres that accompanied the enormous public trauma and anguish at the wave of terror.

Peres himself, according to close insiders, is in a fighting mood, assuring all those around him that the election battle is "far from over" and directing the massive Israeli crackdown against Hamas in the territories with vigor and confidence.

The opposition Likud attributed Peres' comeback to the boost being given him by the anti-terrorism summit some 30 foreign leaders, including President Clinton, are expected to attend this week in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheik.

But the state of Israeli politics — after two weeks of terror and some 2 1/2 months from the May 29 national elections — is more complex.

One reason for Peres' strong standing, in the view of seasoned observers, is the pervasive sense of national crisis that engulfed the country after the bomb blasts.

Of the current gallery of political leaders, Peres is seen, even by many non-Laborites, as the most capable and experienced to handle such a situation.

Netanyahu, 46, suffers, in comparison, from his youth and lack of Cabinet experience.

This assessment of Peres seems even to be compatible, for some, with the belief that his policies brought on or exacerbated the recent terrorist assaults.

### Vast majority seeks separation

However, the question uppermost in everyone's thoughts in the wake of the multiple disasters is what to do next rather than how Israel got to this point.

The answer, embraced by 85 percent of the public in recent polls, is "separation."

Desperate to regain a basic sense of personal security in their own streets, the vast majority of Israelis now say they want, above all, to see their country physically separated from the Palestinian entity.

Whether that entity becomes an independent state is, increasingly, a matter of indifference.

Peres, like his late predecessor Yitzhak Rabin, was never attracted by the arguments of the separationists.

But now, Peres has been persuaded by his younger ministers that this is the way forward, both to reconstruct the shattered peace process and to win the May 29 election.

"Separation," Peres mused Sunday night, "is paradoxical: When you fail [to live together], you need it; if it succeeds, you won't need it any more."

For the moment, most Israelis feel they need it.

And the government, in the context of its all-out war against Hamas terrorism, is flooding the West Bank border zone with army, police and

helicopter patrols. The purpose of this massive effort is to keep the Palestinians out.

To the same end, Israeli officials granted licenses this week for thousands more foreign workers to be brought in to work at low-paying Israeli construction and agricultural jobs in place of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The number of authorized foreign workers in Israel now exceeds 100,000; informed sources say the real total is much higher.

For Labor, with its essentially pragmatic approach to the question of the territories, separation is a policy and an electoral platform that can be adopted without difficulty.

All that is needed to capture the mood of the moment is to secure the money, workers and other required resources for separation projects so that the electorate can be convinced that now, at last, the government means business.

For the Likud and its allies on the right, however, the public yearning for separation poses problems.

Ideologically, Likud is still committed to a Greater Israel — and specifically, to the Jewish settlements throughout the West Bank.

Minister Yossi Beilin is touting a draft agreement with the Palestinian Authority's Abu Mazen calling for the final border to run east of Ariel and the Gush Etzion settlement bloc in the West Bank.

But the Likud is not prepared to forgo the rest of the areas of Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

The anti-terrorism summit also presented the Likud this week with a challenging situation.

Netanyahu could hardly come out publicly against President Clinton — or against the leaders of some 30 other countries — for “meddling” in Israel's pre-election politics. Such an attack would not be a good basis for diplomatic relationships if Netanyahu wins May 29.

Thus, the Likud leader left the grumbling over the conference to lesser lights in his party, men such as Knesset members Uzi Landau and Tzachi Hanegbi.

Netanyahu himself preferred to take a more detached stance, recalling that during the 1980s, when he was a diplomat in the United States and at the United Nations, he had urged international action against Arab terror.

But the Likud's concerns — and hence Labor's hopes — in connection with the Sharm el-Sheik conference do not focus solely on what may be no more than a photo-op in the sun.

### **Conference reflects world opinion**

More important to both parties is the fact that the conference reflects the body of world opinion, which is siding with the peace process that Peres and the late Rabin launched with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

That same message is hammered into Israeli heads and homes, night after night, on dozens of cable channels from the world over.

Israel is very much an open, cosmopolitan society.

The opening of ties, however modest, with Arab and North African states in the wake of the peace agreements has caught the imagination of ordinary Israelis and the business interest of the growing entrepreneurial sector.

Many people, who are far from being doctrinaire supporters of Peres or Labor, are loath to contemplate a return to isolation, to “fortress Israel,” to international cold-shouldering.

Labor, in its electoral campaign, will be pressing these points in an effort to counteract the aftershock of despondency and anger — at the Palestinians but also at the Peres government — that shook Israel after the terrorist bombings. □

## **International leaders divided on goals of anti-terror summit**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Leaders of more than 30 countries are expected to attend an anti-terror summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheik.

But within days after the conference was hastily announced, conflicting views emerged over whether the event would be a high-level photo opportunity or a real chance to formulate international policy against terrorism.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres hailed Wednesday's gathering as a major step toward international cooperation against terror, but Arab participants stressed a broader perspective to the meeting.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who is co-chairing the summit along with President Clinton, downplayed the anti-terror angle, saying that the international conference was called “to support the peace process.”

The summit was called in the wake of a series of recent terror bombings in Israel carried out by the militant Islamic Hamas group.

After invitations to attend the summit were sent out over the weekend, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and French President Jacques Chirac said they would participate, as did Jordan's King Hussein and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Yemen, along with the Persian Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, said they would send representatives to the summit.

Mubarak confirmed Monday that Syria would not attend. Lebanon, too, has turned down its invitation.

Iran, Libya and Iraq — all of which flatly reject the Middle East peace process — were not invited.

The 15 member states of the European Union are to be represented at the summit by Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini and by the president of the E.U. Executive Commission, Jacques Santer.

Other E.U. leaders are expected to attend, including German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, British Prime Minister John Major and Chirac.

### **E.U. to pressure Libya and Iran**

The European Union is also planning to send a three-member ministerial delegation to Libya and Iran to press these countries to openly condemn terrorism.

If these countries refuse to do so, the European Union will reconsider its relations with them, the group's 15 foreign ministers announced Sunday after a two-day meeting in Palermo, Italy.

In a statement issued after the meeting, they expressed the view that the Mideast peace process must continue.

“The European Union must clearly express its solidarity with Israel, its condemnation of terrorism and its continued support for the peace process,” said Susanna Agnelli, the foreign minister of Italy, which is currently chairing the E.U. Council of Ministers.

Meanwhile, Hamas dismissed the meeting.

“The so-called anti-terrorism conference is a hostile international conspiracy to end our people's jihad (holy war) and resistance,” a leaflet distributed by the Hamas military wing said.

The summit is a “desperate attempt to save the Zionists from humiliation and lift their cowardly spirits which were destroyed by our martyrs' courage.”

In the leaflet, Hamas vowed to continue its attacks against Israel. □

(JTA correspondent Joseph Kopel in Brussels contributed to this report.)

## Imbroglia erupts over ADL prize to controversial Holocaust book

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Faced with the threat of a lawsuit, the Anti-Defamation League is awarding its Janusz Korczak Literary Award to a book that "borders on anti-Semitism," according to one Holocaust expert.

The prize is being given to Richard Lukas, who is well-known in the Polish Catholic community but is not well-known or highly regarded among Holocaust scholars.

After ADL officials read the book and decided that it was not an appropriate choice for its prize, the organization tried to withdraw it.

But Lukas threatened to sue.

The award, given biennially to honor a book about children, is named for Janusz Korczak, a Jew who was an internationally renowned Polish educator and social worker.

He ran Warsaw's New Jewish Orphanage and served as a Polish medical officer during World War I. The orphanage was transferred to the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940.

When the Nazis ordered the children deported in 1942, he told them that they were going on a picnic in the country. When they reached the cattle cars, he refused a last minute offer of freedom by the Nazis, and went with the children to his death.

As an international defender against anti-Semitism, the ADL is clearly unhappy about reinstating the award to Lukas for his book "Did the Children Cry?: Hitler's War Against Jewish and Polish Children."

Attached to a terse statement announcing the prize, which is recommended by a panel of judges, is a two-page analysis of why Lukas' book is "problematic in several ways."

Lukas' book about children "strongly understated the level of anti-Semitism in Poland. It also strongly overstated the number of people who rescued Jews," said Kenneth Jacobson, the ADL's assistant national director.

But the group is giving him the award anyway because "when you make a mistake you admit it and move forward," said Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director. "If he is willing to accept our award flawed, with caveats and explanations, let him accept it," Foxman said, adding: "Why should we go into litigation on this? For what purpose?"

Officials at the ADL refused to divulge any details about the composition of the committee that awarded the prize.

### 'Apologist for the Poles'

The author of six other books, Lukas works as an adjunct professor of modern European history at the University of South Florida in Fort Myers.

At least one other book by Lukas, about Poland's role during the Holocaust, had prompted concern over poor scholarship.

Others condemn Lukas and his work in even stronger terms.

Lukas "is an apologist for the Poles' " role during the Holocaust, said Eva Fogelman, who also said the book "borders on anti-Semitism." Fogelman is a Holocaust expert and the author of "Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust."

Lukas "overexaggerates the help that Jews got from Poles during the Nazi occupation," she said.

The ADL's administration at first backed the decision of its panel of judges to award the prize to Lukas for his 1994 book. The ADL notified the publishing company, Hippocrene, on Dec. 1, 1995. The award ceremony was slated for Jan. 23.

Then ADL officials got wind of the book's

questionable content, reviewed the volume themselves and, 10 days before the ceremony, withdrew the award.

In an interview from his Florida home, Lukas said he had his lawyer send the ADL a strongly worded letter threatening a lawsuit, at which point the ADL decided to reinstate the prize.

In its statement announcing the prize, the ADL described Lukas' book as presenting "a sanitized picture of Polish involvement with Jews during the war."

Even one of Lukas' most ardent supporters in the imbroglia said the author is guilty of poor scholarship and apologetics.

Lukas has, at times, "gone beyond scholarly data and fallen into the mode of an apologist," said John Pawlikowski, a Catholic priest and veteran of Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

"There are some passages in this book in which one can say he's either made exaggerated comparisons that are false or misleading," Pawlikowski, a professor of social ethics at Chicago's Catholic Theological Union, said in a telephone interview.

"He is reacting to what he feels is a total misrepresentation of the Polish story in most writing on the Holocaust," said Pawlikowski, the co-chairman of the National Polish American-Jewish American Council who got involved with the ADL on Lukas' behalf.

When told that his book had been described as bordering on anti-Semitic, Lukas laughed out loud, saying, "There's nothing anti-Semitic about this book at all, and that's a very extremist position to take."

Holocaust historians tend "to be too critical of Polish gentiles in the area of their alleged ability to have done more than they did," Lukas said in a telephone interview from his home in Punta Gorda, Fla.

"The Poles were undergoing their own kind of tragedy during World War II, even though it was on a slightly more subdued level" than the one the Jews were suffering.

### 'Being Jewish an impediment'

Lukas said that even though there was anti-Semitism throughout Eastern Europe at the time, the Polish response to the suffering of the Jews "was superior to that of most people in Europe at the time."

Lukas said the prevailing view of the role of Poles in Jewish suffering during the war had developed "because those who have sculpted this view are Jewish."

In contrast, he said, Polish scholarship on the role of Poles during the Nazi period backs up his views.

"Scholarship from the Polish side is not available in the English language. This is why I stand out like a sore thumb and have become a lightning rod for these attacks," said Lukas.

When asked whether it is possible for a Jewish Holocaust historian to fairly view the role of Poles, Lukas said, "For many of them it is very difficult."

"If I were Jewish maybe I'd have the same problem," he said. "In order to muster the kind of objectivity, even-handedness that you need to provide fair-minded history, you need to be emotionally removed from it." Right now, he said, "being Jewish is an impediment to the writing of good history."

Responding to such a view, Fogelman said, "Obviously, everybody who does research brings their own particular point of view, but hopefully, good scholarship goes beyond one's idiosyncratic feelings and preconceived notions, and looks at the data. I don't think that Lukas did that."

Because of the controversy, there will be no ceremony to award the Korczak prize. The \$1,000 award check to Lukas, Foxman said, "is in the mail." □

## Israelis prove resilient in face of terror attacks

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) — After two successive weeks of terror attacks that kept them indoors and away from buses, many Israelis are back in circulation.

While people returning to the streets this week were still fearful of random suicide bombings, they seemed less jittery and more defiant.

Unlike the days immediately after the Feb. 25 and March 3 and 4 bombings, when downtown Jerusalem and Tel Aviv were practically empty, the cities once again saw some action.

According to Chana Mann, a psychologist who specializes in stress disorders, "people handle terrorist attacks in very individual ways."

"Obviously, the nearer one is to any trauma, emotionally and geographically, the more affected they will be," Mann said.

"Those who have lost loved ones are obviously the most traumatized."

Mann often counsels victims of Katyusha rocket attacks that have been launched by the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement on the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona.

"People on the periphery, those who have not lost someone close to them in an attack, are still affected by anxiety," she added.

"There is the feeling that it could have happened to me, and that it can still happen to me.

"The whole country is in a state of uncertainty, of helplessness."

Mann said the residents of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ashkelon — the three cities targeted in the four recent suicide bombings — are experiencing the most anxiety.

But she said, "No one in Israel remains unaffected. In Kiryat Shmona, where Katyushas fall often, some people were at first grateful that we were out of danger — for once.

"But then we learned that someone from Kiryat Shmona was badly injured in the first No. 18 bus bombing [in Jerusalem] and his life is still in danger. He was supposed to get married next week."

Despite earlier predictions that tens of thousands of tourists would cancel their reservations, and that those already in Israel would hasten their departure, only 2,000 potential visitors actually canceled their plans, according to the Ministry of Tourism.

Many tourists did come, in an evident show of solidarity with the Israeli people.

The presence of tourists as well as locals was an especially welcome sight for downtown shopkeepers, whose businesses suffered for two weeks running.

### 'More quiet than wartime'

"There's no doubt that there are more people about," said Sharon, a waitress at the Riviera Cafe on Jerusalem's Ben Yehuda Street.

Sharon also said, "People seem to feel more secure."

Doron David, a jewelry store manager, agreed: "This week has definitely started off better than the previous two.

"Last week, people were simply afraid to come into town, and business was down about 50 percent.

"It's a sunny day and let's hope it bodes well for the future."

"We see improvement over last week," said Yehudit, a shift manager at Jerusalem's landmark Cafe Atara.

"Last week was extremely quiet, even more quiet than wartime.

"I can't remember people acting so depressed. Still, we have to get on with our lives. We don't have a choice."

This view was shared by many of those interviewed in the heart of the capital.

"I'm afraid, but I refuse to let fear stop me from taking a bus in the country that's my home," said Asher Zeiger, a student at Bar-Ilan University.

"Even so, I admit that I was afraid to turn on the radio this morning because I thought I'd hear about another bombing.

"When I heard an upbeat-sounding commercial I knew everything was OK."

"It's been very stressful," said Orna Rubinger, an American student spending a semester at the University of Haifa.

"But this is our home and nobody can take it away from us."

Up until a couple of days ago, "I thought it might be better to stay in Haifa," she said.

"When I finally decided to come to Jerusalem, I took the Thursday night bus instead of the one on Friday morning, when there's more traffic on the roads.

"Instead of leaving early today, I decided to stay until the afternoon, hoping it will be safer."

Asked how other American students were coping with the stress, Rubinger said, "In Haifa, no one has gotten scared enough to leave yet.

"I've heard about some students in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv who are leaving, but they're living in cities where buses blew up." □

## Foreign investors undeterred by spate of suicide bombings

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Market analysts' fears that the recent terrorist attacks in Israel would have a detrimental effect on the stock market were proven false.

In contrast to feared drops of 5 percent to 10 percent, the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was only moderately lower — about 1 percent — when trading resumed last week after a day off for the Purim holiday.

Some analysts had believed that foreign investors, who have been increasingly attracted to Israeli markets as a result of the peace process, would start selling as a result of the recent spate of suicide bombings in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ashkelon.

But as the week progressed, analysts began predicting that foreign investors would continue to invest in the region and that the determining factors in the financial markets would be the same — the budget, the balance of payments and interest rates.

In another development, the Bank of Israel announced that the Jewish state's foreign currency reserves increased by \$857 million in February 1996 to a total of \$9.89 billion.

The central bank reported that the increase was primarily due to Israel's receipt of the remainder of the United States' 1995 aid package.

Meanwhile, Tourism Minister Uzi Baram established a special committee of tourism industry leaders to come up with a strategy to deal with the impact the terrorist attacks might have on tourism.

The Tourism Ministry said 2,000 people had canceled planned trips to Israel as a result of the terror attacks.

But Baram said that if the attacks do not continue, no long-term effects will be felt by the industry. □